

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 00866 041711Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00
XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 IGA-02
L-03 H-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01 /084 W
-----041723Z 054329 /45

P R 041640Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6120
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ALGIERS 0866

RABAT FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, AG
SUBJECT: GOA QUERY RE POSSIBILITY OF BILATERAL WHEAT AGREEMENT

REF: (A) 76 OTTAWA 5038 (B) ALGIERS 827 (C) STATE 72467

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR FINANCIAL AFFAIRS RACHID
BENCHEIKH REQUESTED CHARGE TO COME TO MINISTRY 3 APRIL
TO DISCUSS "US-ALGERIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS". PURPOSE OF
CONVERSATION TURNED OUT TO BE ALGERIAN REQUEST FOR NEGOTIATION OF
GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CEREALS AGREEMENT.

2. BENCHEIKH SAID THAT ALTHOUGH GOA HAS BEEN PURCHASING
US WHEAT THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS IT WOULD PREFER
OPERATE UNDER MULTI-YEAR UMBRELLA CONTRACT BETWEEN
GOVERNMENTS, THUS FACILITATING FUTURE PLANNING. HE CITED LAST
YEAR'S AGREEMENT WITH CANADA DESCRIBED REF (A)
AS TYPICAL OF AGREEMENT HE HAD IN MIND.

3. CHARGE EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE AT PROPOSAL AND
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RECOUNTED RECENT MEETING OF AGATT KUHLMANN WITH GOA
MIN AGRICULTURE DURING WHICH KUHLMANN WAS BELITTLED FOR
EVEN THINKING THAT ALGERIA MAY NEED TO PURCHASE
ADDITIONAL WHEAT FROM US.

4. BENCHEIKH WAS ONLY TEMPORARILY EMBARRASSED AND
SAID SUBJECT WAS NOT RPT NOT DEVELOPED TO POINT

WHERE IT WOULD BE SUBJECT FOR MINAGRICULTURE ACTION.
FOR NOW THEY MERELY EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES; IF
POSSIBILITIES EXIST, THEN IT WILL BE TIME FOR
EXPERTS FROM BOTH SIDES TO WORK OUT DETAILS OF QUANTITIES,
PRICES AND TERMS. HE SAID HE ONLY ASKING EMBASSY WHETHER
"WASHINGTON" WOULD BE PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO PURSUE
SUBJECT FURTHER. HE STRESSED ALGERIAN DESIRE FOR SPEEDY
RESPONSE IN ORDER TO FACILITATE ALGERIAN PLANNING.

5. COMMENT: ALGERIA IS HEADED FOR BAD HARVEST THIS YEAR
(REF B). WE NOT SURE WHETHER GOA SEEKING ASSISTANCE FOR
CURRENT DIFFICULTIES OR, AS BENCHEIKH SAYS, MERELY TRYING
TO RATIONALIZE FUTURE PLANNING. WHATEVER THE MOTIVE
MIGHT BE, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY ANSWER AS TO
WHETHER SUCH BILATERAL AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE, IN PRINCIPLE.
WE ALSO WOULD APPRECIATE INFORMATION ON CCC PROGRAM
DESCRIBED PARA 6 REF (C) AS IT MIGHT APPLY TO ALGERIA. LYNE

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Message Attributes

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